

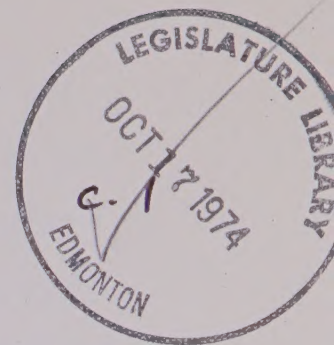
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Personnel Administration in the Alberta
Public Service, Progress Report. 1



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PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

in the

ALBERTA PUBLIC SERVICE

PROGRESS REPORT

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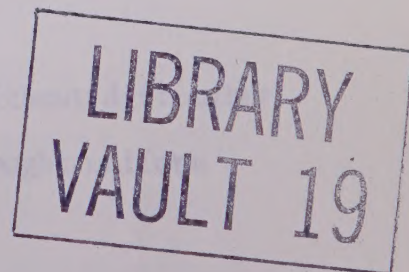
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Alberta
Office of the Public Service Commissioner

November, 1969

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

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PROGRESS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

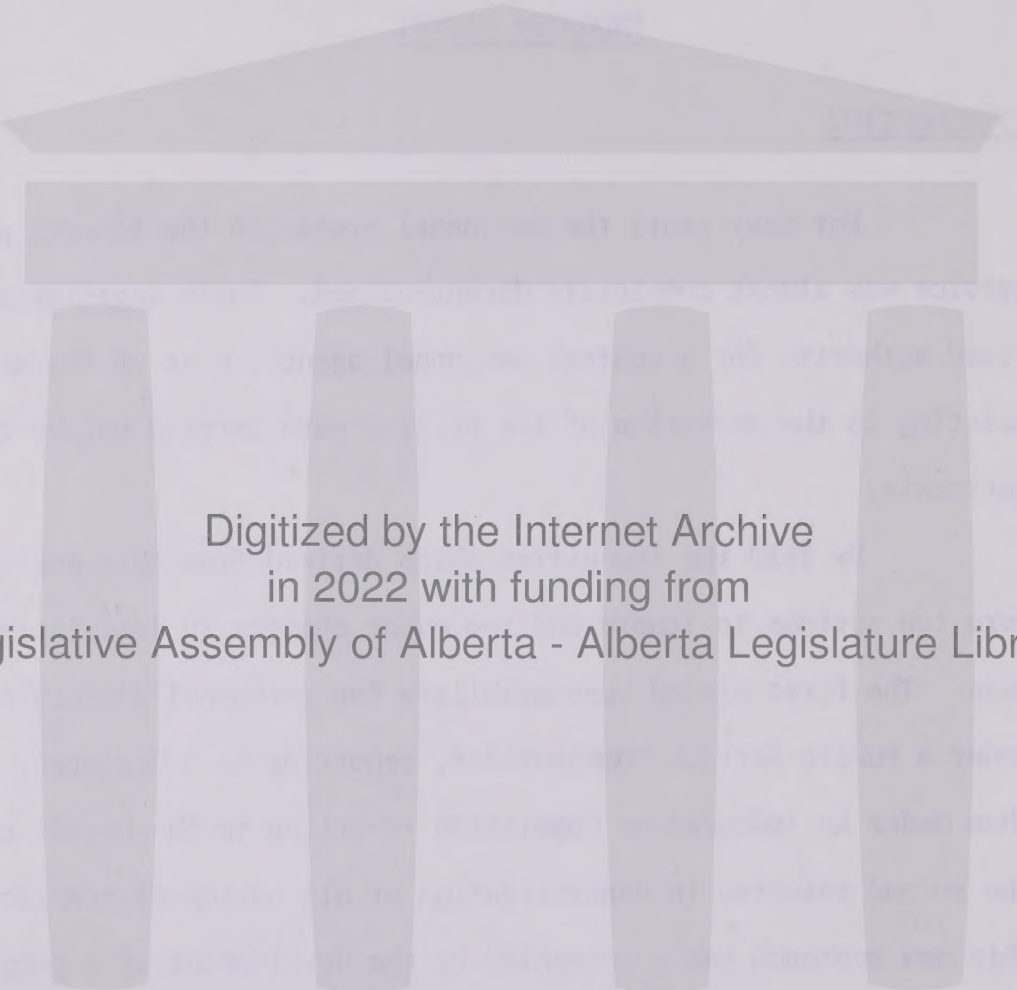
For many years the personnel system in the Alberta public service was almost completely decentralized. While legislation provided authority for a central personnel agency, most of the activities relating to the operation of the program were carried out by the departments.

By 1959 the inequities which derived from this approach were too serious to ignore and two major changes in legislation were made. The first placed responsibility for personnel administration under a Public Service Commissioner, reporting to a Minister, rather than under an independent Commission reporting to the Legislature. The second resulted in centralization of all personnel transactions. This new approach was accompanied by the development of a comprehensive classification and pay plan which formed the primary basis for the continued development of the personnel program.

While the new system was not implemented without difficulty it proved beneficial in developing a system which brought uniform standards into effect throughout the Service.

A STATE OF TRANSITION

While we can be reasonably satisfied that the original ob-



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jectives have been secured there are several factors which have brought us to a re-examination of our system.

During the decade following the implementation of the present system the public service has grown from 8,000 to 20,000 salaried positions. The sheer volume of personnel transactions has placed strains upon the system and made it increasingly difficult to maintain a meaningful individual scrutiny of each transaction. The inevitable result has been delays and frustration. These factors together with the rapid growth of new programs and the growing complexity of administration have made it increasingly difficult for management to operate within the context of a centralized system. Modern management expects to be measured against the success of its programs and, as the Glassco Commission has indicated through its study, cannot control its programs unless it has control of its personnel.

A further factor is the changing climate of employee-employer relations within the public sector. Faced by increasingly militant demands from their employees successive governments across the nation have extended rights comparable to those enjoyed by employees in the private sector. Given a situation in which management decisions may be challenged through a grievance procedure it is essential that management participates in, and is identified with, these decisions, rather than passing the responsibility to a central agency. Furthermore the restrictions of a collective agreement require that department management be fully aware of personnel policies and procedures.

A NEW APPROACH

Consistent with these developments it becomes apparent that authority for as many personnel decisions as possible must be transferred to operating departments. The Executive Council agreed to our proposals for decentralization in 1966 with the stipulation that reasonable uniformity be maintained.

This new approach changes the role of the Personnel Administration Office from one of active involvement to a consultative relationship combined with a general concern for the development of overall policies and standards.

Certain service functions may, as suggested in the following pages, be retained by the P.A.O. In other areas where full or partial decentralization is implemented, it will be necessary to develop information systems which will assist department management in maintaining appropriate standards for the Service.

To-date we have been unable to fully decentralize since the system itself had to reach a stage in development before we could implement. However, some significant inroads have been made. The Public Service Act was completely re-written in 1968; the number and quality of persons engaged in departmental personnel work have increased; we have actively promoted an exchange of personnel between this office and departments, and some work related to the development of procedures to assist the process of installation has been undertaken.

ORGANIZATION FOR THE FUTURE

Faced with ever increasing need for change we have re-

organized the Personnel Administration Office to accommodate the new approach. The old and new organizations are shown in the Appendices A and B.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS DIVISION

Classification Standards

For the last ten years a fully integrated classification and pay plan has been the cornerstone of our personnel system.

It is now apparent that a fully integrated plan must give way before the demands of collective bargaining. While classification remains as an administrative instrument for reasonably uniform treatment of employees doing the same kind and level of work, it is evident that it is in pay setting that it finds its most obvious application. Changes in classification standards effect pay to such an extent that the two often cannot be separated during the negotiations process. Since this fundamental relationship exists, classification standards are therefore included in our new Employee Relations Division together with Pay Research, Fringe Benefit Research and Contract Administration.

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

Classification Allocations

Classification allocations have, until now, been combined with the setting of standards. While there are advantages to this approach we feel that better service can be provided to departments by combining the allocation function with the recruitment function. While the authority for many allocations may be decentralized to the department there will remain classes of an inter-departmental or

complex nature which can best be administered centrally. In such cases departments will now be dealing with only one individual in the process of classifying and filling a position, thus eliminating duplication and delays inherent in the previous system.

At the same time our prime emphasis in recruitment will be to maintain a supply of high calibre applicants with the responsibility for selection being vested in the department.

Executive Compensation

The changes in employee relations have given us a group which is excluded from the collective bargaining process. This provides us with a definable "management" or "executive" group. It has always been accepted that the higher the level of a job the greater is the influence of the incumbent. Thus the higher levels of our integrated plan have always been the subject of conflict between the arguments of the "the man makes the job school" and the strict "pay for position occupied" principles of classification. The identification of an excluded group permits us to establish an executive compensation plan which will give greater recognition to individual worth and which may provide more appropriate conditions of service.

Career Promotion

Our present program of career days, promotional brochures and campus recruiting is to be maintained as a central service on behalf of the whole public service.

Temporary Employment Service

This is a new program to meet the needs of departments for temporary assistance. While the initial emphasis will be on clerical

assistance it is intended to develop a pool of semi-retired executive talent which can be utilized for particular short-term projects.

RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

In the process of re-organization we have taken note of the tendency for program evaluation and development to become buried by operational requirements. By establishing a Research and Systems Development Division we intend to provide a place where new ideas can be tested and developed and where the necessary information and communications systems may be maintained to ensure that standards are maintained and the effectiveness of our programs continuously monitored. The existing Administration and Transactions program will become a part of the Research and Systems Development Division.

ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

At present we are operating only in the area of training. It is apparent that a decentralized system and a collective agreement both emphasize the need for constant training and upgrading of supervisory and management skills. We therefore anticipate an expansion of activity in this area.

Management Advisory Services

We are often approached for assistance in the area of organization studies, office systems and work assignment, but do not have the resource personnel available to meet such requests. It is therefore our intention to develop a small but highly competent group to meet this need.

Manpower Planning

A further objective for the future is the establishment of a manpower planning program. Such a program would see career development patterns established across departmental lines so that the best possible use may be made of existing and potential ability within the public service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Plans for decentralization of certain classification and selection procedures are being developed with a view to implementation by mid-1970. Our ability to decentralize is dependent upon the ability of departments to assume the new duties and the actual date may thus vary from department to department.

One major area of decentralization is the day to day administration of the salary ranges. This activity will be transferred to departments as soon as the Provincial Auditor's Office have completed their re-writing of the payroll system to meet the requirements of their new equipment and to provide us with the statistical information required for post-audit of transactions.

The process of decentralization is of course complicated by staffing needs. Our changing role emphasizes the need for competent individuals able to act in a consultative role. While our staff have the potential for such a role they have not all developed to the point where they can assume it. By the same token the process of assigning greater responsibility to departments will put a premium on having skilled, competent management at both the line and staff level.

In order to assist the process of installation we have as-

signed a member of our senior staff as Program Consultant to provide back-up assistance in all areas.

FUTURE REQUIREMENTS

Once the immediate objectives of decentralization have been met we see three major areas of concern.

One, the need to develop management advisory services, has already been dealt with.

The second area is that of our relationship to the Government and departmental management. Since the Government's ability to recruit, retain and develop staff has a direct affect upon the ability of the Government to implement or maintain its programs, the personnel system is of importance to each Minister and his Deputy. It therefore appears important to us that the attention of these gentlemen be focused upon vital personnel problems at the policy level rather than in the form of spasmodic problem solving.

In many respects this situation is difficult to achieve through a single Minister, whereby personnel administration becomes identified as a single Ministry rather than a joint concern. We therefore wish to explore the possibilities of establishing a committee composed of Ministers and Deputy Ministers who might

1. make recommendations to the Executive Council on personnel policy;
2. provide some monitoring of a decentralized system;
3. act as an appeal body for individuals outside the collective negotiating system.

The third area is that of Employee Relations. It appears to us that employee relations within the public sector are moving inevitably towards parity with the private sector. It therefore follows that the current system cannot be maintained and that decisions must soon be made on:

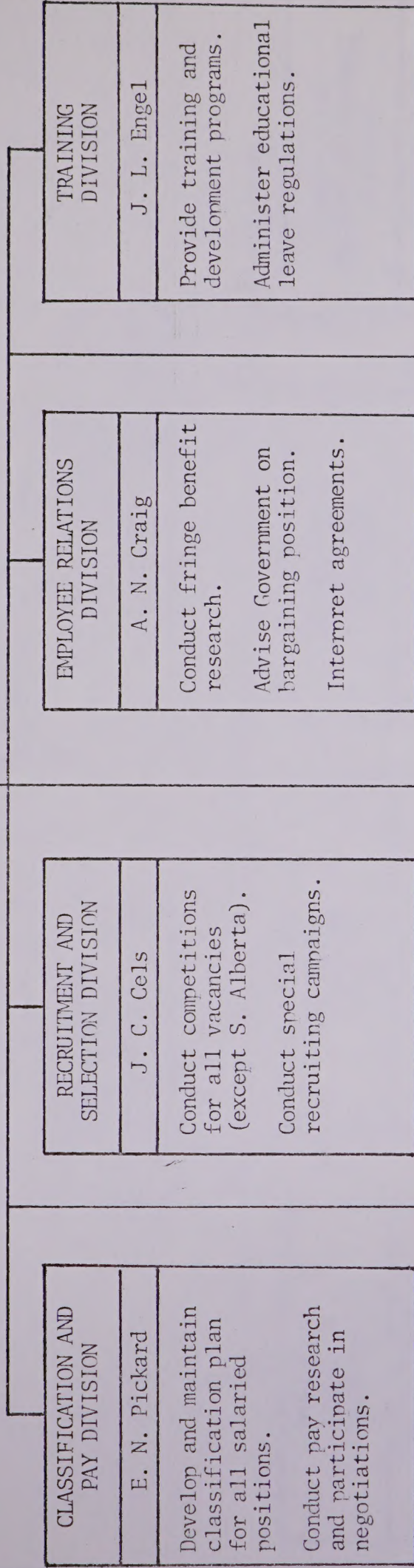
1. The right of public servants to determine who shall represent them.
2. The right of public servants to withdraw their services.
3. The ultimate method of dispute settlement arising from not only negotiations but from interpretation of the agreements.

In our view there is a need to consider a more comprehensive all embracing legal framework to govern and regulate collective bargaining in the public service section.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER
K. J. Robertson



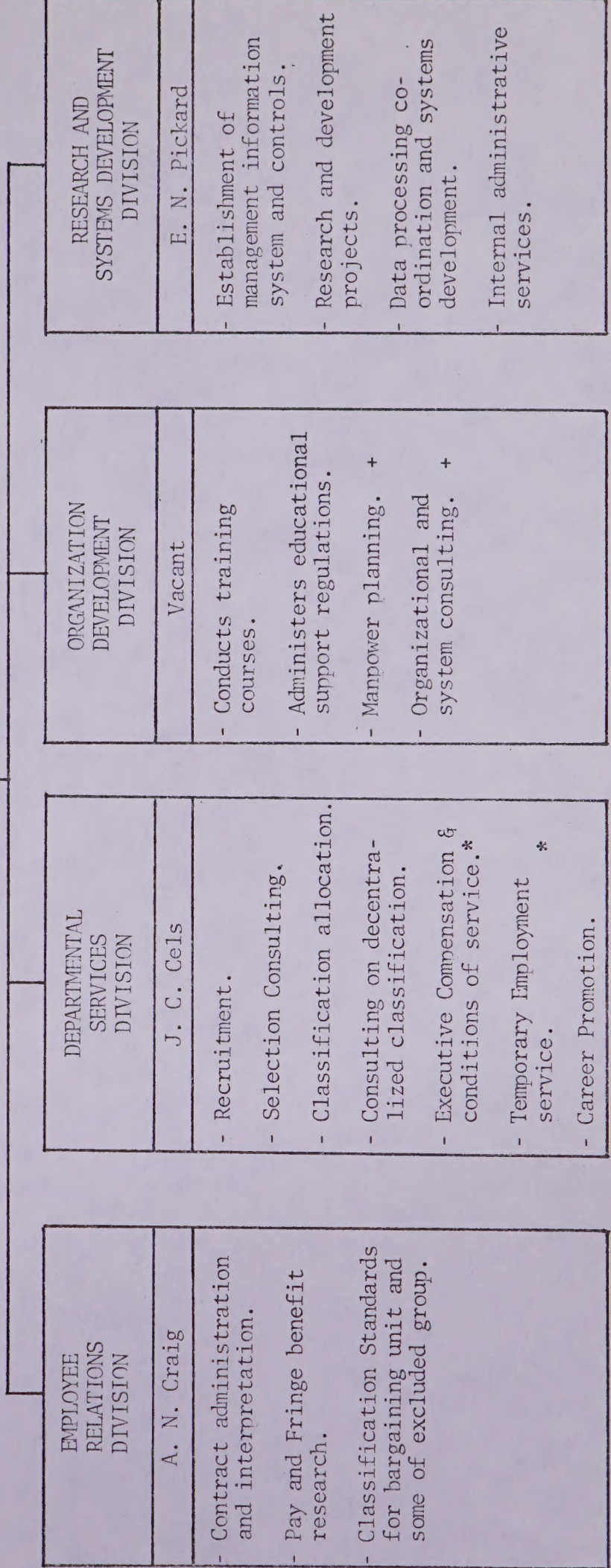
PERSONNEL PLANNING DIVISION	ADMINISTRATIONS AND TRANSACTIONS DIVISION	SOUTHERN ALBERTA REGION OFFICE
J. R. Ife	G. A. Breckenridge	R. A. Elliott
Develop long range plans for personnel program with particular emphasis on decentralization. Liaison with D.P.C.	Interpret regulations. Monitor all personnel transactions against regulations. Provide internal administrative services	Provide recruitment and classification services to Southern Alberta.

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER
K. J. Robertson

SOUTHERN ALBERTA REGION OFFICE
R. A. Elliott

PROGRAM CONSULTANT
J. L. Engel



* under development.

+ to be developed.

